



**October 12, 2010**

**Senator Dan Kotowski**

**Cc John Kamis**

**Budgeting for Results Commission Public Hearing**

**Greetings Commission Members:**

**Please except my sincerest apology for missing the hearing that took place in Chicago on October 12, 2011. I am the President and Co-founder of the Harvey Area Chamber of Commerce and I also hold a board position as Chair of Planning and Business Community Development for the Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce.**

**As President of an Urban Chamber I continue to work through many barriers to make sure that the community businesses and citizens are able to take advantage of programs that are made available to grow businesses and implement workforce certification programs for citizens. The issues that I've encountered were due to the programs not being catered to the structure for Small Businesses and citizens in Urban Communities. Programs are not one size fits all. Each Urban Community has slightly different challenges.**

**We created an Employer and Employee Education Link program to Educate Small Business Owners on how to expand by using state funding instead of working capital to conduct on the job training with local residence. We worked with several organizations who had been allotted the funding. Business Owners loved the idea and we were successful in helping 5 local businesses train and hire a total of 50 drug and alcohol free citizens. Our problem came when the Businesses submitted paper work to the agencies in a timely manner with all of evidence showing proof of payment/current employment for each employee during the 90 day period. It took the agencies no less than 6 months to reimburse the Businesses. This caused major setbacks for those businesses. They were still strained financially until they received reimbursement.**

Another barrier is when agencies are offering training programs that are not suitable for the demands in workforce for the area in which the training is taking place. Programs should be designed with the focal on Community Development and current workforce opportunities in the area. The final result will be that people are trained to qualify for current and future employment opportunities in the communities where they live. With today's economy a system must be created to insure that the results are business and workforce creation and sustainability.

I hope that my input was helpful in your endeavors to create programs that specifically targets the demands of the community. I would be happy to participate on any committees that aid and assist in Small Business and workforce opportunities. Please feel free to contact me direct at (708)244-8798.

Sincerely,

A'ndrea Paxton  
lets\_talk@hacconline.com  
President